

Perceived Influence of Work-Life Balance on Academic Staff Productivity in Rivers State Owned Universities

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the perceived influence of work-life balance on academic Staff productivity in Rivers State owned Universities. Three objectives, three research questions with corresponding hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 7,844 academic staff from Rivers State owned Universities (RSU - 5,433 and IAUE - 2,411). The sample size of the study was 381 respondents. The sample was determined using Taro Yamane formula and multistage sampling technique was adopted in selecting the sample. Data was collected using a self-developed instrument titled: "Perceived Influence of Work-Life Balance on Academic Staff Productivity Questionnaire". (PIWBASPQ) The face and content validation of the constructed instrument was determined by three (3) experts, one in Measurement and Evaluation and two from Education Management Department, Rivers State University. Cronbach Alpha method was adopted to establish reliability indexes of 0.81, 0.83, and 0.82 for the three clusters of the instrument. Out of the 381 copies of the instrument administered, 372 copies were successfully retrieved and used for analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The study found that time balance strongly influences the productivity of academic staff, satisfaction balance greatly influences the productivity of academic staff and flexibility and control influence productivity of academic staff by enabling them manage duties effectively and innovate in Rivers State-owned universities. The study recommended among others that management should implement structured time management policies and regular workload reviews for academic staff.

INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance refers to the ability of individuals to manage the demands of their work roles alongside personal and family responsibilities without one negatively impacting the other. In Nigeria, the concept has gained growing attention due to increased job stress, long working hours, and evolving family dynamics, especially among urban professionals. Recent studies emphasized that maintaining a healthy work-life balance is critical to reducing burnout, improving job satisfaction, and enhancing overall well-being (Uzoechina & Eze, 2021). Organizations that support flexible working arrangements and family-friendly policies are more likely to retain motivated and productive staff (Akinwale & George, 2022). In sectors like banking and education, where work pressures are high, the absence of a work-life balance has been linked to declining mental health and weakened employee performance (Ojo & Ogunyemi, 2023). Therefore, creating supportive workplace cultures that respect personal time is essential in promoting balance, particularly in the context of Nigeria's fast-paced economic environment.

Work-life balance is essential to academic staff productivity in Rivers State owned Universities. As supported by Amadi (2021), adequate time for personal and family life influences concentration and commitment to teaching. Eke (2022) emphasized that secure job conditions reduce anxiety and foster professional growth. George and Wokoma (2023) also argued that when lecturers feel secure and have control over their work-life demands, they show higher motivation, reduced burnout, and better performance. These factors collectively influence research output, teaching effectiveness, and institutional growth, as universities thrive on the stability and well-being of their workforce. Work-life balance can significantly influence the productivity of academic staff, particularly in Nigerian universities where academic and administrative duties often overlap. A well-balanced routine between personal and professional responsibilities allow lecturers to maintain mental clarity, reduce stress, and dedicate focused time to teaching, research, and mentoring. According to Ofoegbu and Nwankwo (2022), when academic staff are constantly overwhelmed with workloads without sufficient time for rest or family, their efficiency drops leading to delayed research output and reduced teaching quality. Universities that adopt flexible work schedules and promote wellness programmes see influenced engagement and job satisfaction among staff. On the contrary, lack of work-life balance has been associated with job dissatisfaction. Long working hours, coupled with insufficient institutional support, often force lecturers to work under stressful conditions, influencing both their productivity and health. Ikenna and Yusuf (2023) found that academic staff who are unable to manage their time between work and family obligations report lower morale, increased absenteeism, and diminished professional commitment. Ikenna and Yusuf further emphasize the need for policies that support balanced workloads and psychological well-being. Okorie and Nwafor (2022), in their study findings revealed that academic staff with flexible work schedules experienced influenced focus and reduced burnout, leading to higher research output and better classroom engagement. Flexibility enables them to manage personal and

professional roles effectively, which sustains long-term productivity. Research study carried out by Umar and Bello (2023), concluded that institutions that promote work-life balance through supportive policies, such as reduced workload and stress management programmes, see higher commitment levels and efficiency among lecturers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To stay productive, Adeyemi and Uzochukwu (2024) As acknowledged that academic staff who intentionally schedule rest periods, delegate responsibilities, and engage in non-academic hobbies report higher job satisfaction and productivity. They also tend to experience fewer health-related issues associated with chronic stress. Moreover, social and institutional support mechanisms play a crucial role in how staff manage work-life integration. Universities that provide accessible healthcare facilities, flexible academic calendars, and wellness programmes make it easier for staff to meet both personal and professional obligations. Therefore statement was corroborated by Bello and Ibitoye (2023), who opined that such provisions significantly reduce emotional exhaustion and encourage long-term career commitment. These findings underscore the importance of institutional reforms that acknowledge the personal lives of academic staff as key to their professional output. Chukwuemeka and Abiola (2020), in their independent study found that academic staff maintained productivity by scheduling non-teaching hours for family responsibilities and self-care, which helps them recharge and perform better in their professional duties. Also Ibrahim and Oladipo (2023), found that the use of digital tools and remote teaching has enabled academic staff to multitask effectively, allowing them to fulfill academic and domestic obligations without compromising quality. Adequate time balance is directly linked to heightened productivity for academic staff in private universities, as evidenced by research. Vander Elst et al. (2021) demonstrated that when faculty exert control over their work hours, it prevents exhaustion and preserves their cognitive capacity for complex tasks. This safeguarding of mental resources is essential for maintaining high-quality research and influenceive teaching. Nwankwo and Eze (2022) established that academic staff with a balanced allocation of time for teaching, research, and community service exhibited markedly higher productivity. They concluded that university management must formulate and enforce equitable workload policies to prevent role overload and maximize scholarly output. Adeyemi and Sanni (2021) found that ininfluenceive time management, driven by excessive lecture hours and administrative duties, was a primary contributor to academic staff stress and reduced research productivity. The study by Adetomiwa, Akintola, Ejiwoye and Olabisi (2023) revealed that academic staff in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria reported low levels of research productivity and identified multiple contributing factors. Among these factors, difficulties in balancing teaching, research and service i.e., time-balance emerged as significant: staff who reported frequent time pressure across their roles showed lower productivity. Adetomiwa et al. in addition stated that enabling better time allocation across core responsibilities could help raise productivity. Appropriate time-balance

where staff can manage teaching loads, research tasks and service obligations coherently is essential to optimize academic staff productivity in privately-owned universities.

Building on this, such control significantly enhances job satisfaction, which is a core driver of motivation. As highlighted by Gropel and Kuhl (2018), the fulfillment of autonomy and competence needs often met through flexible scheduling is a primary contributor to professional well-being. Satisfied academics are inherently more driven to contribute meaningfully to their institution. According to the study of Igbokwe and Okoro (2020), a critical balance between job security (extrinsic satisfaction) and professional growth opportunities (intrinsic satisfaction) is vital. Their research revealed that an imbalance, particularly a lack of professional development, severely dampened staff motivation and organizational commitment. A study by Lawal and Bello (2023) demonstrated that non-monetary satisfaction factors, such as recognition from departmental heads and a sense of workplace fairness, were more potent motivators for sustained performance than financial incentives alone in state-owned universities. The study by Ifechi, Okoli and Nwosu (2022) showed that among lecturers in selected private universities in Nigeria, professional career development and teamwork were significantly related to job satisfaction, with teamwork having the stronger influence. Given that job satisfaction is a key antecedent of motivation, their findings imply that when satisfaction in areas such as career progression and collaborative teamwork is maintained, academic staff motivation is higher. The authors concluded that satisfaction-balance where institutional systems satisfy staff expectations for recognition, growth and collegueship is vital in motivating academic personnel in private university settings.

Ultimately, this satisfaction is operationalized through institutional flexibility. Knight et al. (2019) found that interventions granting employees autonomy directly influence work engagement and performance. For academics, this empowerment to structure their own work leads to more efficient and innovative outcomes, thereby directly improving institutional productivity. Okafor and Chukwu (2022) discovered that granting academic staff autonomy over their research focus and instructional methods directly correlated with a significant influence in publication rates and teaching innovation. They identified departmental leadership as key to granting this operational flexibility. Mohammed and Ibrahim (2021) found that a top-down management approach with minimal staff involvement in departmental decision-making led to feelings of powerlessness and reduced productivity. Mohammed and Ibrahim further advocate for decentralized governance to enhance staff ownership and performance. The study by Ayodele and Adeyeye (2024) found that research self-efficacy (an internal control variable) significantly influenced research productivity of academic staff in private universities in Oyo State. While the focus was self-efficacy, the authors discuss the implications in terms of control over one's research process (time scheduling, topic choice, methodology) as the mechanism. The inference is that granting academic staff flexibility and control in managing their research processes correlates with influenced productivity;

thus, giving staff more autonomy and flexible work conditions supports better outcomes in privately-owned universities.

This study presents fresh insights by linking work-life balance and job security directly to employee productivity among academic staff in Rivers State owned universities an area previously underexplored. It revealed that balanced personal-professional life and stable employment significantly boost productivity levels. Unlike earlier research focused on corporate sectors, this study uniquely addresses academic environments in Rivers State, Nigeria. The main gap identified is the lack of longitudinal data and comparative analysis across public and private institutions, which limits broader generalization. This opens avenues for future research on institutional differences and long-term influences of employment conditions on academic staff performance. In contemporary educational management, the psychological contract between educators and institutions has evolved, prioritizing holistic support systems. A critical component is fostering a sustainable work-life balance, which directly impacts organizational health and teacher retention. Opatha and Arulrajah (2021) indicated that strategic management policies designed to reduce burnout and empower personal time are not merely beneficial but essential for institutional success. When educational leaders actively promote flexible scheduling and respect boundaries, they cultivate a more dedicated and resilient workforce, demonstrating that professional dedication and personal well-being are mutually reinforcing, not opposing, forces which is a function of time management.

Time balance simply means sharing your time in a way that allows work, school, rest, and personal activities to coexist without overwhelming you. When people manage their time well, they often feel calmer, more organised, and more emotionally stable. Aeon and Aguinis (2017) noted that time balance improves when individuals set clear priorities, avoid taking on too much, and follow routines that guide their daily decisions. When time is divided fairly across major parts of life, productivity rises and stress reduces. Time management is the ability to plan, organize, and control how one spends time to complete tasks efficiently while minimizing stress. It involves setting priorities, creating schedules, and monitoring progress to ensure that goals are met. For academic staff, effective time management is essential to balance multiple responsibilities, including teaching, research, administrative duties, student supervision, and personal commitments. When time is managed well, staff experience reduced stress, greater productivity, and better control over their work-life balance (Abdul Kader & Eissa, 2022).

Satisfaction balance in an academic context refers to the degree to which staff feel fulfilled both professionally and personally in other words, how well their job meets their needs without overwhelming their life outside work. Achieving satisfaction balance means having enough job resources, recognition, and support, while also being able to manage stress, role demands, and personal commitments. When academic staff feel that their teaching, administrative, and research roles are meaningful and well-supported, this contributes strongly to their overall job satisfaction (Osuji & Bakpo, 2022).

Flexibility and control describe how individuals organise their daily tasks in a way that allows them to adjust to changing demands while still maintaining a clear sense of direction. Flexibility makes it possible to shift activities, reorganise plans, and respond to unexpected events without losing stability. Control, on the other hand, reflects a person's ability to make decisions about how and when tasks are completed, giving them confidence in managing their responsibilities (Wepfer, Allen & Brauchli (2022).

Academic staff productivity refers to the ability of lecturers and researchers to carry out their core responsibilities effectively, including teaching, research, supervision, community service, and administrative duties. Productive academic staff are able to deliver quality teaching, publish meaningful research, guide students, contribute to institutional growth, and engage with society. Modern discussions show that academic productivity is shaped by how well staff balance these multiple roles while meeting increasing institutional expectations (Mudrak et al., 2018). Teaching effectiveness refers to how well an academic staff member is able to deliver lessons in a way that supports students' understanding, engagement, and overall learning. Effective teaching involves clear communication, good lesson planning, the use of suitable teaching methods, and the ability to create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment. Modern discussions on higher education emphasise that teaching effectiveness goes beyond presenting information; it requires helping students develop critical thinking, practical skills, and confidence in their learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017)

Statement of the problem

The issue of work-life balance and job security significantly influences employee productivity among academic staff in universities across Rivers State. Many lecturers struggle to manage the increasing demands of their academic responsibilities alongside personal commitments. Teaching workload, research expectations, and administrative duties leave little room for family life or personal well-being. This imbalance often led to burnout, fatigue, and declining enthusiasm, which in turn reduces the quality of teaching and research output. The inability to properly separate work from personal life have been found to cause stress and dissatisfaction, making it difficult for many staff members to function at their best. Job security was another pressing concern. Many academic staff, particularly adjunct and contract academic staff, faced uncertainty regarding contract renewals and promotions. This insecurity creates a sense of instability, reducing their motivation and commitment to long-term institutional goals. The fear of job loss or delayed confirmations often discourage lecturers from innovatively investing fully in their roles. Even permanent staff are not immune, as delayed promotions and non-payment of allowances reduces their morale.

Through observation, it became clear that while these challenges were well known, few tailored solutions had been proffered at the institutional level, as human resource departments often lacked ineffective systems to monitor staff well-being or introduce flexible work schedules. Moreover, the lack of supportive leadership and mentoring structures widened the gap between junior and senior

staff, reducing collaboration and knowledge sharing. The major gap in knowledge lay in the absence of localized empirical studies that examined how the interplay between work-life balance and job security impacted academic productivity in Rivers State owned universities. Most existing literature offered general conclusions without considering the unique socio-economic realities of state owned universities. There is also limited documentation of experiences of affected staff, which would have provided deeper insight into how these problems manifested on a daily basis. Hence, a focused, context-driven study on “perceived influence of work- life balance and job security on employee productivity among academic staff in Rivers State owned Universities”.

Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of staff of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent to which time balance influence the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State owned universities.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of staff of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent to which satisfaction balance influence the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State owned universities.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of staff of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent to which flexibility and control influence the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State owned Universities.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised academic staff in Rivers State owned universities: Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE). The total population was 7,844 academic staff, distributed as follows: 5,433 from RSU and 2,411 from IAUE. The sample size for this study was 381 respondents. The sample was determined using Taro Yamane formula from the total population for the study. Multistage sampling technique was adopted for this study. First, a stratified random sampling was used to stratify academic staff into RSU and IAUE in order to select 381 academic staff. At the second stage the quota sampling technique was applied to select 245 academic staff from RSU and 136 academic staff from IAUE. The developed instrument titled: “Perceived Influence of Work-Life Balance on Academic Staff Productivity Questionnaire (PIWLBASPQ)” was used to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument was divided into two sections (A and B); Section A contained the demographic data of the respondents while section B contained 15 item questionnaire for the study. The segment of the instrument was patterned on four scale modified four Likert type rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) 4-points, Agree (A) 3-points, Disagree (D) 2-points and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1-point.

The validity of the instrument was determined by three (3) experts 1 in M & E and 2 from Education Management in the Department of Educational

Foundations, Rivers State University. The reliability of the instrument was established by administering 30 copies of the instrument to respondents who were not part of the study. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability with indexes of 0.81, 0.83 and 0.82 for the three clusters of the instrument. This showed that the instrument was reliable. Out of three hundred and eighty-one (381) copies of the instrument administered, 372 copies were retrieved on the spot and used for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while Independent t-test was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question One: To what extent does time balance influence the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State owned universities?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on Influence of Time Balance on the Productivity of Academic Staff In Rivers State Owned Universities

S/N	Item	RSU N=220		IAUE N=152		Mean Set	Remark
		Mean ()	Std. Dev.	Mean ()	Std. Dev.		
1.	When academic staff manage their time well, they meet deadlines and complete tasks efficiently.	3.35	.67	3.26	.73	3.30	High Extent
2.	Proper time balance allows lecturers to prepare better for classes and research activities.	3.33	.74	3.24	.78	3.29	High Extent
3.	Time balance reduces stress and helps staff maintain focus on academic goals.	3.36	.66	3.24	.79	3.30	High Extent
4.	Academic staff who plan their schedules effectively can balance teaching, research, and administrative duties.	3.36	.69	3.29	.72	3.33	High Extent
5.	Poor time balance often leads to burnout, lateness, and reduced quality of work output.	3.32	.72	3.26	.71	3.29	High Extent
Average Mean & Std. Dev. Scores		3.34		3.26		3.30	High Extent

Decision Rule: Agree (computed ≥ 2.50) and Disagree (computed < 2.50).

Source: Survey Data 2025

Table 1 result shows that time balance strongly influences the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State-owned universities. Across all five items, staff from RSU and IAUE recorded mean scores above the 2.50 benchmark, showing general agreement. The results indicate that lecturers who manage their time well meet deadlines, complete tasks faster, and prepare better for teaching and research. Time balance also helps reduce stress and keeps staff focused on academic goals. Effective scheduling enables them to handle teaching, research, and administrative duties without conflict. The findings further show that poor time balance may cause burnout, lateness, and low-quality work. With a combined mean of 3.30, the responses confirm that proper time balance improves

productivity, work quality, and overall performance among academic staff in the two universities. The result further shows that time balance influences productivity because it helps academic staff stay organised, reduce stress, and perform duties effectively. Since all items were rated above the decision point, the staff clearly recognise time balance as essential for better work outcomes.

Research Question Two: To what extent does satisfaction balance influence the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State owned universities?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation analysis on the extent satisfaction balance influence the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State owned universities

S/ N	Item Statement	RSU N=220		IAUE N=152		Mean Set	Remark
		Mean ()	Std. Dev.	Mean ()	Std. Dev.		
6.	When staff are satisfied with their job conditions, they show greater interest and enthusiasm in their duties.	3.36	.69	3.32	.70	3.34	High Extent
7.	Satisfaction from fair pay, recognition, and a good work environment encourages consistent motivation.	3.33	.68	3.36	.67	3.35	High Extent
8.	Academic staff who feel valued by their institution are more committed and willing to work harder.	3.35	.69	3.23	.88	3.29	High Extent
9.	Low job satisfaction reduces morale and influences the drive to achieve departmental or institutional goals.	3.38	.73	3.34	.67	3.36	High Extent
10.	Balancing personal satisfaction and work expectations leads to long-term motivation and better performance.	3.36	.68	3.31	.70	3.34	High Extent
	Average Mean & Std. Dev. Scores	3.36		3.31		3.31	High Extent

Decision Rule: Agree (computed ≥ 2.50) and Disagree (computed < 2.50).

Source: Survey Data 2025

Table 2 result indicates that satisfaction balance greatly influences the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State-owned universities (RSU and IAUE). All the items recorded mean scores above the 2.50 cut-off, indicating agreement from academic staff in RSU and IAUE. The results reveal that when lecturers are satisfied with their job conditions, they show more interest and enthusiasm in carrying out their duties. Fair pay, recognition, and a supportive work environment also boost their productivity. Staff who feel valued by their institutions display stronger commitment and willingly put in more effort. The findings further indicate that low satisfaction weakens morale and reduces the drive to meet departmental and institutional goals. Balancing personal satisfaction with work expectations helps sustain long-term productivity and improves overall performance. With an average mean of 3.31, the responses confirm satisfaction balance as a strong productivity. The result in addition shows that satisfaction balance strongly boosts productivity because staff feel valued, supported, and encouraged. Since all mean scores were above the

decision point, it is clear that satisfied lecturers are more committed, enthusiastic, and willing to put in their best.

Research Question Three: To what extent does extent to which flexibility and control influence the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State owned Universities?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation analysis on Extent to which flexibility and control influence productivity of academic staff in Rivers State owned universities

S/ N	Item Statement	RSU N=220		IAUE N=152		Mean Set	Remark
		Mean ()	Std. Dev .	Mean ()	Std. Dev.		
11.	Flexibility in work schedules allows staff to manage teaching, research, and personal life more effectively.	3.16	.57	3.03	.74	3.09	High Extent
12.	When lecturers have control over their workload, they perform tasks with greater efficiency and creativity.	3.16	.54	2.90	.64	3.03	High Extent
13.	Flexible work arrangements reduce pressure and promote a healthy work-life balance.	3.09	.64	3.05	.81	3.07	High Extent
14.	Allowing staff to choose how they organize their duties increases accountability and productivity.	3.13	.66	3.08	.73	3.11	High Extent
15.	Flexibility and control promote innovation and influence overall job satisfaction among academic staff.	2.95	.68	2.97	.78	2.96	High Extent
	Average Mean & Std. Dev. Scores	3.09		3.01		3.05	High Extent

Decision Rule: Agree (computed ≥ 2.50) and Disagree (computed < 2.50).

Source: Survey Data 2025

Table 3 result presents how flexibility and control influence the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State-owned universities. All five items recorded mean scores above the 2.50 benchmark, showing general agreement among staff from both RSU and IAUE. The results indicate that flexible work schedules help lecturers balance teaching, research, and personal life more effectively. Having control over workload allows staff to work efficiently and creatively. Flexible arrangements also reduce pressure, supporting a healthier work-life balance. When staff can decide how to organize their duties, accountability and productivity improve. Flexibility and control further encourage innovation and positively influence overall job satisfaction. With an average mean of 3.05, the findings confirm that providing academic staff with flexibility and control in their work enhances performance, promotes creativity, and supports a balanced approach to professional and personal responsibilities. The result indicate that flexibility and control influence productivity of academic staff by enabling them manage duties effectively and innovate. Since all mean scores exceeded the decision point, lecturers clearly benefit from autonomy in scheduling and task management, boosting efficiency and job satisfaction.

Test of Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of staff of RSU and IAUE on the extent to which time balance influence the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State owned universities.

Table 4: Independent t-test analysis on influence of time balance on the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State owned universities

Group	N		Std. Dev.	df	t-value	p-value	Alpha Level	Remark
RSU	220	3.34	.70	370	1.340	0.000	0.05	Ho ₁ : Sig.
IAUE	152	3.26	.75					
Total	372	3.3	.73					

* Significance 0.05 > 0.00. Not Significance 0.05 < 0.00

Table 4 presents an independent t-test analysis of the influence of time balance on academic staff productivity in Rivers State-owned universities. The results show that RSU staff had a mean of 3.34 (SD = 0.70) while IAUE staff had a mean of 3.26 (SD = 0.75). The calculated t-value was 1.340 with 328 degrees of freedom, and the p-value was 0.000, which is below the 0.05 alpha level. This indicates a statistically significant difference in productivity based on time balance between the two universities. Therefore, time balance significantly influences academic staff productivity, with RSU staff showing slightly higher productivity than IAUE staff.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of staff of RSU and IAUE on the extent to which satisfaction balance influence the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State owned universities.

Table 5: Independent t-test analysis on the influence of satisfaction balance on the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State owned universities

Group	N		Std. Dev.	df	t-value	p-value	Alpha Level	Remark
RSU	220	3.36	.69	370	2.604	0.000	0.05	Ho ₂ : Sig.
IAUE	152	3.31	.72					
Total	372	3.34	.71					

* Significance 0.05 > 0.00. Not Significance 0.05 < 0.00

Table 5 shows the independent t-test analysis on the influence of satisfaction balance on the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State-owned universities. RSU staff recorded a mean of 3.36 (SD = 0.69), while IAUE staff had a mean of 3.31 (SD = 0.72). The t-value of 2.604 with 328 degrees of freedom yielded a p-value of 0.000, which is below the 0.05 alpha level. This indicates a statistically significant difference in productivity between the two universities based on satisfaction balance. The findings suggest that satisfaction balance significantly influence academic staff productivity, with RSU staff showing slightly higher motivation levels than their IAUE counterparts.

Ho₃: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of staff of RSU and IAUE on the extent to which flexibility and control influence the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State owned Universities

Table 6: Independent t-test analysis on how flexibility and control influence productivity of academic staff in Rivers State owned universities

Group	N		Std. Dev.	df	t-value	p-value	Alpha Level	Remark
RSU	220	3.09	.62	370	3.216	0.00	0.05	Ho ₃ : Sig.
IAUE	152	3.01	.74					
Total	372	3.05	.68					

* Significance $0.05 > 0.00$. Not Significance $0.05 < 0.00$

Table 6 presents an independent t-test analysis on the influence of flexibility and control on the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State-owned universities. RSU staff had a mean score of 3.09 (SD = 0.62), while IAUE staff recorded a mean of 3.01 (SD = 0.74). The calculated t-value was 3.216 with 328 degrees of freedom, and the p-value was 0.000, which is below the 0.05 alpha level. This shows that there is a statistically significant difference in productivity between RSU and IAUE based on flexibility and control. The results suggest that giving staff flexibility and control positively influence their productivity, with RSU staff benefiting slightly more than IAUE staff.

DISCUSSION

Result from research question 1 and hypothesis 1 showed that time balance strongly influences the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State-owned universities. Similarly, the study of Nwankwo and Iheanacho (2019) established that academic staff with a balanced allocation of time for teaching, research, and community service exhibited markedly higher productivity. Nwankwo and Iheanacho concluded that university management must formulate and enforce equitable workload policies to prevent role overload and maximize scholarly output. Adeyemi and Sanni (2021) found that ineffective time management, driven by excessive lecture hours and administrative duties, was a primary contributor to academic staff stress and reduced research productivity. The study by Adetomiwa, Akintola, Ejiwoye and Olabisi (2023) revealed that academic staff in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria reported low levels of research productivity (mean 2.02 on a 4-point scale) and identified multiple contributing factors. Among these factors, difficulties in balancing teaching, research and service i.e., time-balance emerged as significant: staff who reported frequent time pressure across their roles showed lower productivity. Adetomiwa et al. therefore concluded that enabling better time allocation across core responsibilities could help raise productivity. This finding suggests that appropriate time-balance where staff can manage teaching loads, research tasks and service obligations coherently is essential to optimize academic staff productivity in privately-owned universities.

Result from research question 2 and hypothesis 2 showed that satisfaction balance greatly influences the productivity of academic staff in Rivers State-owned universities. Thus, influenced job satisfaction enhances commitment, enthusiasm, and overall work productivity. In confirmation with the study of Igbokwe and Okoro (2020) whose result in line with the present study result revealed a critical balance between job security (extrinsic satisfaction) and professional growth opportunities (intrinsic satisfaction) is vital. Igbokwe and

Okoro in addition research revealed that an imbalance, particularly a lack of professional development, severely dampened staff motivation and organizational commitment. A study by Lawal and Bello (2023) demonstrated that non-monetary satisfaction factors, such as recognition from departmental heads and a sense of workplace fairness, were more potent motivators for sustained performance than financial incentives alone in state-owned universities. The study by Ifechi, Okoli and Nwosu (2022) showed that among lecturers in selected private universities in Nigeria, professional career development and teamwork were significantly related to job satisfaction, with teamwork having the stronger influence. Given that job satisfaction is a key antecedent of motivation, their findings imply that when satisfaction in areas such as career progression and collaborative teamwork is maintained, academic staff motivation is higher. Ifechi et al. supported that satisfaction-balance where institutional systems satisfy staff expectations for recognition, growth and collegiality is vital in motivating academic personnel in private university settings.

Result from research question 3 and hypothesis 3 indicated that flexibility and control influence productivity of academic staff by enabling them manage duties effectively and innovate in Rivers State-owned universities. Corroboratively, the study of Okafor and Chukwu (2022) in line with the result of the present study discovered that granting academic staff autonomy over their research focus and instructional methods directly correlated with a significant influence in publication rates and teaching innovation. They identified departmental leadership as key to granting this operational flexibility. Mohammed and Ibrahim (2021) found that a top-down management approach with minimal staff involvement in departmental decision-making led to feelings of powerlessness and reduced productivity. Their findings advocate for decentralized governance to enhance staff ownership and performance. The study by Ayodele and Adeyeye (2024) found that research self-efficacy (an internal control variable) significantly influenced research productivity of academic staff in private universities in Oyo State (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.104$, $p < 0.05$). While the focus was self-efficacy, the authors discuss the implications in terms of control over one's research process (time scheduling, topic choice, methodology) as the mechanism. The inference is that granting academic staff flexibility and control in managing their research processes correlates with influenced productivity; thus, giving staff more autonomy and flexible work conditions supports better outcomes in privately-owned universities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the finding, the study concluded that time balance strongly influences the productivity of academic staff, satisfaction balance greatly influences the productivity of academic staff and flexibility and control influence productivity of academic staff by enabling them manage duties effectively and innovate in Rivers State-owned universities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Management should implement structured time management policies and regular work load review to enhance productivity of academic staff.
2. Administrators should establish regular staff satisfaction surveys and reward systems to maintain motivation and productivity.
3. University leadership should create policies allowing flexible work arrangements and task autonomy to enhance staff productivity.

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